Creating healthy communities through a reduction in the food access gap, progressive programming, increasing long-term cost savings to the community, and addressing the needs of our changing demographics.
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Executive Summary

The year began with a celebration of the 45th anniversary of the Senior Nutrition Program followed by a response to COVID-19 social distancing mandates that completely changed the delivery model and saw a 40% increase in meals served.

From the beginning in 1974 when there were 12 sites serving 800 meals a day to the pandemic of 2020 when over 17,000 meals are served daily at 37 sites, the mission to reduce food insecurity and social isolation continues. The public health mandates required the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) to transition service model providing to-go or curbside meals as well as limited home-delivered meals prepared by a congregate meal provider. From March to September 2020 SNP has enrolled about 2,220 additional new participants into the program.

The strong partnerships and dedicated staff have been essential in providing more meals to more older adults during the pandemic. The resilience of the essential workers and volunteers has been extraordinary. They are the true heroes.

In early 2020, we launched a searchable Geographic Information System (GIS) map on our website that clients can access online and be able to search nearby meal locations and determine best transportation routes. This was an asset to communicating the most up to date information about times of meal services as we changed to curb side pick-up.

The COVID-19 public health pandemic has proven to be a disruptive force this year and is providing both great challenges and great opportunities to senior nutrition programs. The ability to leverage emerging opportunities rests in an organization’s partnerships and community support. The coming year will explore how to address social isolation through virtual educational programs and other creative avenues of communication and engagement. This will include partnering with programs to increase digital inclusion for older adults.

Over the last fiscal year, the Senior Nutrition Program has responded to the crisis of a pandemic with dedication and determination to serve older adults in our community. Each challenge was a learning opportunity that will strengthen the program in the coming years.

New this year - GIS map

With the assistance of the Technology Service and Solutions department, SNP launched a searchable, Geographic Information System (GIS) that allows for SNP participants to access information to the program at any time with respect to their location. This GIS map overlays with other valuable information such as transportation routes, CalFresh accepting restaurants, nearby Farmers’ Markets, hours of operation, reservation information, and much more.
SNP Highlights

1,433,802 Meals Served
15,384 Unduplicated Participants

2,470 FMOW Phone Calls
638,274 MOW Meals Delivered
1,042 Friendly Visits

$23.92 CBO Living Wage Amendment
10 Ethnic Cuisines Served

11,975 Paratransit Rides
6,272 Monthly Bus Passes
1,711 Shared Ride Gas Cards
Service Modification during COVID-19

Since the start of the Shelter in Place Order for COVID-19 in March 2020, the Senior Nutrition Program has transitioned from dining-in to to-go meal service at all congregate sites. The modified service allows congregate meal sites to provide grab-and-go meals, curbside drive-through, and home deliveries. Older adults on the regular county Meals on Wheels (MOW) program continued to receive weekly meal deliveries. With COVID-19, the SNP added a weekly meal service delivery to eligible older adults who are sheltering-in-place and required meals to be delivered to their homes.

Site Closures

The four sites that closed in mid-March were Billy De Frank, Cubberley Community Center, India Community Center - Cupertino, and Live Oak Adult Day Services. Participants who regularly visited these sites were redirected to other nutrition sites for meal service. Additional resources such as food access and mental health were provided to the participants via wellness calls. The reopening date for these sites has not been determined.
In May 2020, when four nutrition sites closed their doors due to the pandemic, SNP collaborated with San Jose State University, School of Nursing to initiate a Telehealth survey in order to check the well-being of participants who regularly attended these sites. This survey identified older adults who were food insecure, socially isolated, and connected them with available community resources. These students provided customized nutrition education approved by the program dietitian and conducted follow up calls if the participant requested. This telehealth survey was conducted on participants who went to sites that closed in addition to some newly enrolled Covid MOW clients. There were 174 surveys collected. 30 respondents (17%) were not able to shop for groceries on their own and 60 (34%) did not know that they were still eligible pick up to-go meals at other SNP meal locations. In addition, SJSU nursing students were able to complete their course requirements and graduate in May.

Supply Hub at Salvation Army

When COVID-19 forced a shelter-in-place order, the congregate meal sites stopped all indoor dining and activities for the foreseeable future. All meals are pre-packaged using disposable products. To ensure the sites have the products needed for meal distribution, SNP partnered with The Salvation Army-Silicon Valley and used its existing congregate meal site as a central supply hub. The Salvation Army’s staff are highly skilled and capable of taking on the task of receiving and distributing purchased supplies. Through coordination with SNP staff, the congregate sites can request and pick-up to-go containers, bowls, cups, and personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, and hand sanitizers. At the helm of the supply hub is Debby Reynolds, the site manager for The Salvation Army. Debby and other essential staff are instrumental in ensuring that the supply hub has adequate supplies for distribution. Through their efforts and collaboration, to-go meal service continues for the older adults throughout the community during COVID-19.

“The staff here at the Salvation Army truly love what we do every day. We are all very grateful that we can serve and provide the essential services our community needs during these uncertain times. We work as a team, take care of one another, and serve our community with lots of love and laughter.” (Debby Reynolds)

San Jose State University Nursing Students Conduct Telehealth Survey

In May 2020, when four nutrition sites closed their doors due to the pandemic, SNP collaborated with San Jose State University, School of Nursing to initiate a Telehealth survey in order to check the well-being of participants who regularly attended these sites. This survey identified older adults who were food insecure, socially isolated, and connected them with available community resources. These students provided customized nutrition education approved by the program dietitian and conducted follow up calls if the participant requested. This telehealth survey was conducted on participants who went to sites that closed in addition to some newly enrolled Covid MOW clients. There were 174 surveys collected. 30 respondents (17%) were not able to shop for groceries on their own and 60 (34%) did not know that they were still eligible pick up to-go meals at other SNP meal locations. In addition, SJSU nursing students were able to complete their course requirements and graduate in May.
Covid-19 Meal Service

In order to expand services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SNP received Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) from Sourcewise for the period of March 20, 2020 through June 30, 2020. These funds were awarded to Older Americans Act recipients for the purpose expanding congregate and home delivered meals services. Funds received were $100,432 to expand meals provided to congregate meals participants and $240,000 to expand home delivered meals services to homebound participants.

Covid-19 Meals Served (March - June)

After the COVID-19 pandemic shelter in place order went into effect through June 30, 2020, SNP began home delivering meals to 1303 additional participants and enrolled and additional 921 new participants in its congregate meals program to receive to-go of curbside meals.
Covid-19 Survey Results

In an effort to understand the needs of the community during a pandemic, Senior Nutrition program distributed a survey to its participants in early spring 2020. Here are the results based on the 2,973 responses received.

**Access to Nutrition - Related Resources**

73% of respondents have access to food.

16% of respondents have access to mental health services.

33% of respondents have internet access.

98% of respondents were able to connect with friends and family.

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Through the Older Americans Act (OAA), the Santa Clara County Senior Nutrition Program provides healthy meals in group settings, such as senior centers and faith-based locations, as well as in the homes of older adults who live alone. In addition to meals services, the program offers a wide range of services including nutrition screening, socialization, assessment, education, and transportation. Nutrition services are authorized under Title III-C of the OAA. Designed to promote the general health and well-being of older individuals, the services are intended to:

- Reduce hunger and food insecurity,
- Promote socialization, and
- Delay the onset of adverse health conditions.

Programs target adults age 60 and older who are in greatest social and economic need, with attention to the following groups.

- Low-income older adults
- Minority older individuals
- Older adults in rural communities
- Older individuals with limited English proficiency
- Older adults at risk of institutional care

The variety of programs offered include the Dining/Café Program, Meals on Wheels, Neighborhood Meals on Wheels, Friends from Meals on Wheels, and the Mobility Management.
Who We Serve

The Senior Nutrition Program is a Santa Clara County program that administers nutrition programs for seniors (age 60 years or older) under the Older Americans Act. Congregate meals are available to all seniors regardless of income and Meals on Wheels are available to homebound seniors who are unable to shop and/or prepare meals for themselves.

15,384 Seniors Served 55% Age 75+ 35% Over Age 80

46% At Or Below The Federal Poverty Line 34% Live Alone 66% Minorities

Congregate and MOW Participants by Race

- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 74
- Asian & Pacific Islander: 8,091
- White/Non-Hispanic: 3,392
- Hispanic/Latino: 2,387
- African Ancestry: 341
- Mixed Race/Others: 361
- Declined to State: 738
On October 10th, the Santa Clara County Senior Nutrition Program celebrated 45 years of providing high quality meal options for older adults through Meals on Wheels and 40 dining sites. Together with the community and Supervisor Wasserman, SNP commemorated this anniversary through a showcase of SNP caterers, retrospective of 45 years of service, and an intergenerational Aztec dance performance. The event was held at the Mexican Heritage Plaza and attended by 245 members of the community.

Outstanding Years of Services Awards
Margaret Marrujo, Eastside Neighborhood Center, 22 years
Earlene Minnis, Mountain View Senior Center, 19 years
Mary Ruth Batchelder, La Comida, 17 years
Thanh Nguyen, Cubberley Community Center, 15 years
Dining/Cafe Program

The Congregate Meals Program offers nutritious and healthy lunches at 40 different nutrition sites throughout the County of Santa Clara. These lunches are either cooked on-site or are catered by local restaurants or local food vendors and provide 1/3 of the Daily Reference Intake for a senior. Additionally, these daily lunches allow seniors the opportunity to socialize with one another and access exercise programs, classes, and other activities and information at the site. The Congregate Meals Program is open to all seniors age 60 or over.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all congregate dining sites were closed for dine-in meals effective March 16, 2020. Participants can pick up meals to go at most locations.
Viet Tu Te Charity Updates

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors continued to support the funding of meals to Viet Tu Te Charity. Located in an area of high percentage of low-income older adults based on the Federal Poverty Level, nutritious and healthy Asian vegetarian meals were provided to eligible older adults. This center provides a cultural venue for participants to engage in religious and cultural activities every week while enjoying vegetarian meals catered from Di Lac restaurant.

Viet Tu Te Highlights:

- Serves an average of 176 meals per day for three days each week.
SNP Targets Areas of Greatest Need Throughout Santa Clara County

Percent of Older Adults Ages 65 or Over Living Below 185% FPL

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<td>16 - 30%</td>
<td>31 - 51%</td>
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FY2019 Senior Nutrition Program Congregate Meal Sites (N=40)

Author: Santa Clara County Social Services Agency Office of Research and Evaluation
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17024 retrieved on 12/14/2017. Santa Clara County Senior Nutrition Program Congregate Meal Sites, FY2019
### 2020 SNP Meal Sites and Older Adults Under 185% Federal Poverty Level by Zip Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Location Site</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Zip</th>
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There was an increase of **100,697 congregate meals** served (16%).

There was an increase of **586 unduplicated older adults** (4%).
Participant Demographics

Congregate Meals Participants by Age Range

Asians participants (57%) were the largest demographic group that utilized the program. This represents an increase of 364 participants (5%) from FY 2018-2019.

Approximately 54% of participants in the Congregate Meals Program are 75 years of age or older.

Congregate Meals Participants by Race

Participants of Chinese descent were the largest sub-group, making up 49% of the Asian demographics.
Participant Demographics

Approximately 49% of Congregate Meals Program participants live at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), no change from last year. In 2019, the FPL for a household of one (1) person was $12,490 annually or $1,040.83 monthly.

Approximately 34% of Congregate Meals participants live alone.

Approximately 22% of congregate meals participants are at nutritional risk.
Annual Participant Satisfaction Survey

In FY 2019-2020, with the assistance of the Social Services Agency, Office of Research and Evaluation, SNP Redesigned Participant Surveys in order to measure participant outcomes. The results of this survey will be utilized to create baseline measures and engagement strategies to optimize the program's services in subsequent years. There were over 2,900 surveys collected.

- 75% of participants agree or strongly agree that SNP helps them to stay healthy.
- 73% of participants agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the meals provided by SNP.
- 72% of participants agree or strongly agree that socializing at congregate meal sites helps them to maintain their overall health.
- 63% of congregate meals participants indicate that the reason they enjoy going to nutrition sites is to see friends and socialize.
- 64% of participants indicate that they enjoy going to nutrition sites for food.
The Meals On Wheels (MOW) Program provides meal service to homebound older adults 60 years of age and older who are unable to provide meals for themselves or have difficulty obtaining food because of illness, frailty, or disability. Participants receive nutritious meals equivalent to 2/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance for older adults. The Senior Nutrition Program offers two home-delivered meals options:

**Santa Clara County Meals on Wheels**

Through a contract with Bateman Community Living, the Meals on Wheels Program provides qualifying older adults with a weekly delivery of 14 meals (five frozen lunch/dinner entrées, a salad entrée, a sandwich or wrap, and seven breakfasts) supplemented with milk, bread, juice, and other grocery items.

30% are 80-89

62% live alone
Meet Jill

Jill O’Nan is an extremely motivated and disciplined individual who is self-reliant and lived independently in her home prior to COVID-19. When the pandemic struck the Bay Area, Jill was left to canned goods and condiments she had remaining in her house. Living with an autoimmune disease, the Coronavirus posed a severe threat to her health. Unable to leave her house but requiring food to maintain adequate health, Jill reached out to the Senior Nutrition Program asking for food assistance. With the support of the County Board of Supervisors, the Home Delivered Meal Program (HDM) or Meals on Wheels (MOW) for older adults sheltering in place was implemented. Jill was able to access this program and meals were immediately delivered to her home. For the next several months, the friendly MOW staff provided contactless weekly delivery of food consisting of 14 meals per week. According to Jill, the food was nutritious, flavorful, and provided balance and variety. The microwavable food served as an easy and quick meal during her virtual social lunch hour with friends and colleagues. As more information and guidance about COVID-19 surfaced, Jill was advised by her doctor to get outside a bit more for exercising and shopping purposes. Jill would make grocery lists and utilize the “senior hours” to shop at stores such as Safeway. As she felt more confident in buying and preparing meals on her own, she decided to stop the MOW program. Although she received meal services for only several months, she was very grateful for the program since it provided a reprieve from worrying about food access and the possibility of COVID-19 exposure.
Program Trends

Meals on Wheels Served 5 Year Trend

There was an increase of 38,506 Meals on Wheels meals served to older adults in FY 2019-2020 (6.42% increase).

Unduplicated Clients Served 5 Year Trend

There was a decrease of 106 unduplicated older adults.

Meals on Wheels Outreach Campaign

In January 2020, SNP launched a marketing campaign and mailed informational postcards to over 30,000 older adults living in Santa Clara County. This awareness campaign resulted in increased enrollments of eligible older adults into the MOW program.
**Participant Demographics**

**Meals on Wheels Participants by Age Range**

Approximately 30% of MOW participants are 80-89 years old.

**Meals on Wheels Participants by Race**

MOW provides meals to a diverse group of homebound older adults.
89% of MOW participants agree or strongly agree that the meals provided help them maintain their overall health.

35% of the MOW Survey respondents are interested in receiving additional food assistance.

90% of the MOW participants agree or strongly agree that the MOW program helps them maintain their independence.
This was the first year that Neighborhoods Meals on Wheels (NMOW) was included as a fundable program through our home-delivered meals request for proposal. To that end, Yu Ai Kai and Portuguese Organization for Social Services and Opportunities (POSSO) were awarded funds for NMOW programs and deliver to select zip codes within San Jose and Santa Clara. The contracts started on July 1, 2019.
Yu-Ai Kai’s Neighborhood Meals on Wheels

Yu-Ai Kai’s Neighborhood Meals on Wheels program provides eligible older adults in the Japantown and Berryessa areas with a daily hot meal. MOW is a valued safety-net program for many older adults in the community as it allows homebound older adults to maintain their independence and increases their ability to remain in their homes.

Cooks preparing Atlantic Cod at Yu-Ai Kai

Portuguese Organization for Social Services and Opportunities (POSSO)

POSSO’s Neighborhood Meals on Wheels program specializes in cooking authentic Portuguese meals and delivers the hot meals Monday through Friday. POSSO delivers meals to Santa Clara, East Foothills, and Eastside areas. Homebound seniors truly enjoy the home cooked Portuguese meals and value the ability to maintain their independence at home.
Meet Mary and Henrique

When meals are delivered every day, the case workers and drivers become a meaningful part in the day of the older adults receiving the meals. This was evident for the relationship of Lucinda with Mary and Henrique. Lucinda is a case worker for the Portuguese Organization Social Services and Opportunities (POSSO) NMOW program. Mary and Henrique immigrated from the Azores Islands, Portugal over fifty years ago to search for better opportunities. They want to remain independent in spite of recent health challenges. Their case manager is helping them to postpone moving into assisted living housing for as long as possible. As they have aged, they have lost some freedom as both are unable to drive, prepare or shop for meals and depend on the NMOW program to deliver meals. Lucinda had noticed a decline in Mary’s memories. During one lunch delivery, Lucinda discovered that Henrique was seriously ill and called an ambulance to get him the immediate surgery he required. Henrique is back home and fully recovered. Lucinda’s relationship allowed her to get the in-home care they needed, including language and transportation services. Because of the help of Lucinda, Mary and Henrique can continue to enjoy the delicious Portuguese cuisine in the comfort of their own home.
Friends from Meals on Wheels (FMOW) began in April of 2016 as a partnership between the Senior Nutrition Program and The Health Trust (THT). The goal of FMOW is to increase socialization for the County of Santa Clara’s isolated and homebound older adults. The Senior Nutrition Program, in collaboration with The Health Trust, is working to ensure the frailest and eldest adults in Santa Clara County are receiving services that increase their physical and mental health, happiness, and quality of life. The Health Trust is adopting a new social isolation tool that will help it track its participant’s outcomes more effectively. Additionally, it is expanding the evidence-based programs used for its exercise visits to better meet client needs. Although any participant receiving Meals on Wheels qualifies for the program, emphasis is placed on seniors who are 75 years or older, have chronic health issues, live alone, and/or are at the highest risk for institutionalization.

Activities provided to FMOW participants include:

- initial home-visit assessments.
- subsequent home-visits,
- telephone calls,
- exercise home-visits or virtual calls,
- pet food deliveries, and
- birthday card and gift deliveries.
Meet Samantha and Misty

Samantha (not her real name) began participating in Friends from Meals on Wheels in 2017. She is 69 years old and lives with her dog named Misty. She joined the program to gain companionship after her daughter passed away and she did not have any relatives or close friends nearby. Her friendly visitor began weekly outdoor visits with Samantha to get fresh air for both her and her dog but soon faced the problem that Samantha was not able to sit anywhere safely, and visits were often cut short as a result. With the support of her friendly visitor, Samantha was connected to a service that provided her with a seater walker, which allowed Samantha to sit outside and have longer and more meaningful visits safely. Samantha also often expressed how vital her dog Misty was to her wellbeing, but that she struggled to afford food and supplies. It became clear that Samantha would feed her dog instead of herself if necessary. Through the Pets and Loving Seniors program provided by Friends from Meals on Wheels, Samantha now receives a monthly delivery of dog food, so she doesn’t have to choose between feeding herself or her dog. Samantha’s friendly visitors continue to provide support through any barriers she may face by building strong relationships and connecting her to community resources. Even through the Coronavirus pandemic, Samantha has continued to receive referrals from her friendly visitor for medical and dog supplies. Samantha’s social and emotional well-being has improved since joining the program, and both Samantha and Misty look forward to weekly visits or calls from their friendly visitors.

FMOW Program Highlights

- **96** Total Clients
- **63%** Age 75+
- **227** Pet Food Bags Delivered
- **73** Birthday Cards/Quilts Delivered
- **1,042** Friendly Visits
- **2,470** Phone Calls
Mobility Management Program

Santa Clara County Senior Nutrition Program makes its nutrition services more accessible to low-income, older adults by offering free transportation benefits such as bus passes, gas cards, and paratransit rides through its Mobility Management Program (MMP). The purpose of MMP is to provide access café meals and the socialization opportunities to participants who otherwise would not be able to access them. Eligibility for bus passes and gas card services is determined by these three criteria; income using the Elder Economic Security Index for the County, no means to reach the café without transportation benefits, and regular café attendance. In FY 2019-2020, the MMP program served at all 40 meal locations and helped 1160 participants. The total number of benefits decreased for the year, in part because Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) offered its services for free in April, May, and June in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Services

SNP distributed a total of 7,983 benefits (gas cards and bus passes) and reimbursed the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority for providing a total of 11,975 paratransit rides to nutrition program participants. This represents a nominal decrease from FY 2019-2020 in benefits distributed to nutrition participants in FY 2018-2019.

Service Trends

*Free VTA rides - April, May, June
Participant Demographics

Mobility Management Participants by Age Range

Approximately 80% of Mobility Management Program participants live at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

In 2019, the FPL for a household of one (1) person was $12,490 annually or $1040.83 monthly

Approximately 35% of Mobility Management participants live alone.

Asian participants were the largest demographics groups utilizing MMP.
In FY 2019-2020, the Senior Nutrition Program expended $11,341,964.

Of the $11,341,964 expended by the Senior Nutrition Program, $296,303 was utilized for transportation services through the Mobility Management Program (exclusively funded from the County General Fund), $143,580 went towards funding the Friends from Meals on Wheels Program, and $10,389,990 funded nutrition services through the Congregate Meals Program and Meals on Wheels program.
## Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congregate Meals</td>
<td>$7,993,971</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility Management</td>
<td>$296,303</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meals on Wheels</td>
<td>$2,396,019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Wheels on Meals</td>
<td>$232,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends From Meals on Wheels</td>
<td>$143,580</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pet Food</td>
<td>$7,373</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Food Truck Pilot</td>
<td>$9,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vie Tu Te</td>
<td>$258,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vie Tu Te - Mobility Management</td>
<td>$4,015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Expenditures
- $11,341,965

### Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County General Fund</td>
<td>$6,765,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title III (Federal)</td>
<td>$1,978,106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title III (State)</td>
<td>$590,306</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Contributions</td>
<td>$651,089</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition Services Incentive Program</td>
<td>$1,016,689</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family First Care Relief Act</td>
<td>$340,432</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Total Program Cost
- $11,341,964
Innovations and Partnerships

San Jose State University (SJSU) Work Study Program

The Federal Work Study Program provides the Senior Nutrition Program with student assistants to assist with projects, handle congregate meal client registration and monthly rosters for the nutrition sites. This gives the students an opportunity to work part-time to help fund their education at San Jose State University (SJSU) while simultaneously gaining workplace experience.

Intergenerational Mobile Dining

Last year, SNP partnered with Mountain View Whisman School District to offer a mobile meal program at Rengstorff Park in Mountain View. The program was incredibly successful despite the relatively small amount of outreach conducted by SNP. In collaboration with Stanford School of Medicine, a formal research project is being conducted to better understand the population served through this program and how it can improve to meet the needs of grandparents caring for grandchildren.

Oral Health for Older Adults

The Oral Health for Older Adults subcommittee is part of the Oral Health Plan for Santa Clara County administered by the Department of Public Health. The goal is to improve the oral health of older adults in Santa Clara County. Senior Nutrition took the lead to chair the subcommittee. Key stakeholders include, nursing, dental hygienists, community health clinics’ dentists, Public Health, and the Department of Aging and Adult Services, gathered to write recommendations for the California Master Plan on Aging. These recommendations included integration of primary and dental care as well as mobile dental clinics to increase access to care.

Market Match Program

The Senior Nutrition Program continued to team up with the Public Health Department to promote the exciting Market Match Program to SNP participants. As part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or CalFresh, Market Match is an incentive program matching funds that doubles the amount of CalFresh dollars. When clients use CalFresh EBT cards at Market Match participating farmers’ markets, they can receive up to $10 free per day. This amount can be added to the CalFresh EBT card to spend on purchasing varieties of fresh produce at the height of the season. An increase of fruits and vegetables allows seniors to make healthier food choices with the added positive impact on health. Not only do seniors benefit but local farmers are supported by the community and can promote their businesses.
As an additional incentive, a total of 1400 vouchers, for $3.00 each, were distributed to 16 congregate sites (AACI, Alma, BDF, Eastside, Evergreen, Gardner, ICC Milpitas, John XXIII, KACS, Milpitas, Northside, POSSO, Salvation Army, Southside, Sunnyvale, Viet Tu Te, and Yu Ai Kai) along with informational flyers about the program in languages such as English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. These locations were targeted because they are within a five-mile radius to a participating farmers’ market.
Challenges and Opportunities

Future Opportunities

In the coming year, SNP plans to roll out programming to enhance services in the community and address some of the challenges.

Restaurant Voucher Meal Program

The launch of a restaurant meal program will help to increase meals service hours to include dinner meals at select restaurants. The traditional lunch time hour is limiting for certain older adult populations. More people in the Bay Area are working into their older age due to the rising cost of living. The restaurant voucher program will help to alleviate the stress of where the older workforce will find an affordable or free meal during hours that are outside of the traditional SNP mealtime hours.

Virtual Programming and Digital Inclusion

A key component of the Senior Nutrition Program is socialization as well as a healthy meal. The staff have been creative in communicating with the participants from printed newsletters included in their bag to birthday signs at the drive-through line. We will offer virtual programing, but face the digital divide for many of the participants. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need to close the digital divide for older adults. The data for our SNP annual satisfaction survey shows the digital divide affects nearly 67% of the participants. This is compounded by the fact the 30% live alone and most are low income and struggling to make ends meet. To get connected and close this divide they need affordable devices, internet access and training. Through the Age-friendly Digital Inclusion Workgroup we will assess feasibility for a pilot Digital Inclusion Project focusing on low-income participants in the Senior Nutrition Program.

New Technology Solutions

The current data collection platform is outdated and does not provide the most consistent, reliable data. This is an on-going problem for SNP and can be a deterrent in establishing innovative non-traditional service models. SNP continues to work with the county’s Technology, Services and Solutions department to find or retool a database for the program. By creating a user-friendly system to replace the current labor-intensive system, SNP will be able to streamline data collection procedures, enhance transportation services and have real-time data collection.
Future Challenges

This year has been a year to respond to the crisis of the pandemic. Many of the challenges the Senior Nutrition Program faces before the social distancing orders continue and will need to be addressed in the future as we strive to offer the best programs and services to our diverse and growing older adult demographic. These challenges include:

- Increased funding needs to address the exponential growth of the program during the pandemic.
- To build effective solutions that will balance the requirement of physical distancing and socialization at the same time.
- Inconsistent and lack of staffing of SNP’s Mobility Management Program.
- Addressing social determinants that impact health:
  - Despite the growing food insecurity among older adults in Santa Clara County, with nearly 12% of older adults in the county being food insecure\(^1\).
  - There is a growing concern of social isolation among the general aging population, especially older adults living alone.
  - Deteriorating oral health among SNP participants, with about 13% of all SNP participants having tooth or mouth problems that make it hard to eat.
  - Creating inclusivity for the older adult LGBT community.
  - Addressing the growing homeless/transient population in Santa Clara County\(^2\).
  - Targeting people experiencing income instability, as 52% of all SNP participants are at or below the Federal Poverty Level.
- Changing and negative perceptions of SNP that impede participation.
- Engaging the boomer generation that infrequently access services.

References
